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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1313**

January 21, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Member of the House of Representatives  
United States House of Representatives  
1421 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Haaland,

Congratulations on your historic nomination to the position of Secretary of the Department of Interior. I am grateful to have worked with you on several bills during our time in Congress and look forward to working with you during your time in the Biden Administration.

While serving as the Chair of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands at the House Natural Resources Committee, your subcommittee advanced my legislation, H.R. 139, the Springfield Race Riot Study Act. With your help, the House of Representatives successfully passed the amended version of this bill on September 21, 2020, and ultimately included it in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (P.L. 116-260). As amended and enacted, this language directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the Springfield Race Riot Site to determine its suitability for inclusion as a unit of the National Park System.

In your new role, I write to invite you to visit the site of the 1908 Springfield Race Riot. As you know, this important site consists of the remains of five homes that were burned during the 1908 Springfield Race Riot, one of the worst race riots in our nation's history. The 1908 Springfield Race Riot was sparked by a white mob who, after being thwarted in an attempt to lynch two black inmates at the local jail, went on a rampage that ended in the death of at least six, and the destruction of black homes and businesses. During and immediately following the event, nearly 2,000 black residents fled the city and most never returned.

These riots were evidence that racial injustice was not an isolated issue only in the South, but one to be addressed across the nation. In February 1909, and in response to the riots, civil rights leaders formed the National Negro Committee in New York City, New York; the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the oldest civil rights organization in the world.

As you transition to your new role as Secretary of the Interior, I look forward to continuing to work with you, particularly as it relates to giving this site proper recognition. It would be my honor to host you for an event at the site, so that you can experience firsthand its importance to

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our country's history. I appreciate your consideration of this request and for your continued support of the Site's inclusion in the National Park System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rodney Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "D".

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Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress